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| APPLICATION NO.  | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/600,368   | 06/23/2003  | Matthew P. Warden    | ROL-002US           | 7114             |
| 31496  | 7590        | 04/29/2005           | EXAMINER            |                  |
| SMITH PATENT CONSULTING CONSULTING, LLC<br>P.O. BOX 2726<br>ALEXANDRIA, VA 22301 |             |                      | MENDOZA, MICHAEL G  |                  |
|  |             |                      | ART UNIT            | PAPER NUMBER     |
|  |             |                      | 3731                |                  |

DATE MAILED: 04/29/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

E

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/600,368

Applicant(s)

WARDEN ET AL.

Examiner

Michael G. Mendoza

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 9-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 9-14 and 18-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 15-17 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 June 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)             | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Drawings***

2. New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because figure number, reference numbers, and reference lines are hand drawn/written and are not clearly drawn. Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsman outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance.
3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "flat scoop" must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet,

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and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

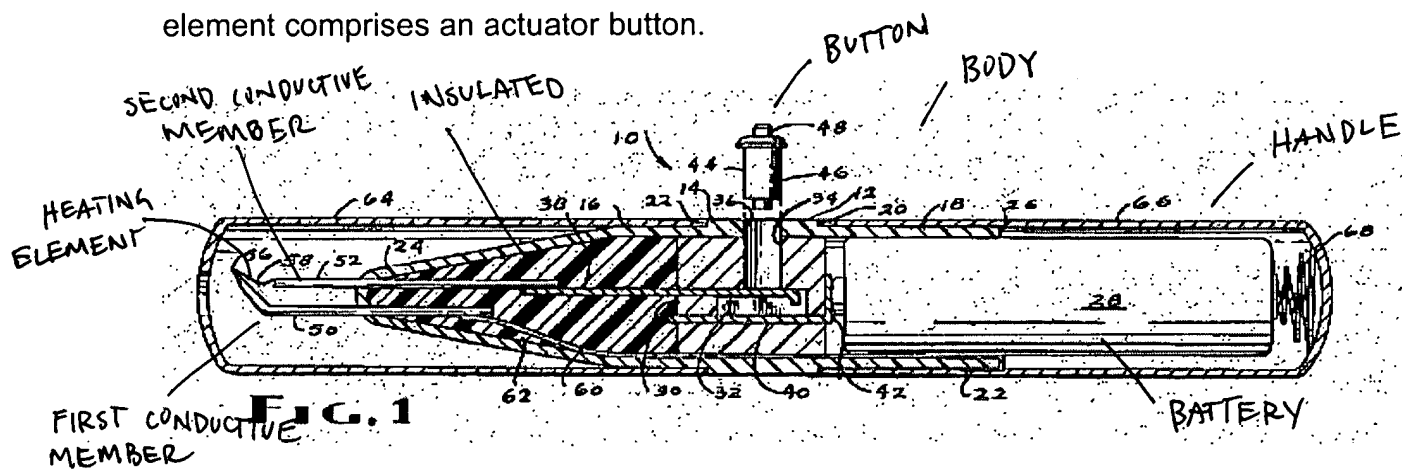
(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-7, 9-12, 14, and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Babb 3234356.

6. Babb teaches a suture removal instrument comprising: an elongated body having a proximal handle portion and insulated distal portion; a first and second conductive members extending from the insulated distal portion of the elongated body, the first conductive member termination in a tapered tip; a resistive heating element extending between the first and second conductive members, and wherein the resistive heating element is affixed at its proximal end to the distal end of the second conductive member and at its distal end to the tapered tip of the first conductive member;

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conduction means; and activation means; wherein the elongated body comprises a cylindrical housing; wherein the first conductive member comprises an elongated cylinder; wherein the tapered tip comprises a conical point; wherein the resistive heating element comprises a thin filament; wherein the resistive heating element is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of nichrome, tungsten, nickel, and stainless steel (col. 4, lines 51-54); wherein the heating element forms an acute angle with the axis of the tapered tip; wherein the acute angle ranges from about 5 to about 40 degrees; wherein the instrument further comprises a power source contained within the handle portion of the elongated body; wherein the power source comprises at least one battery; wherein the activation means for controlling the supply of power to the heating element comprises an actuator button.

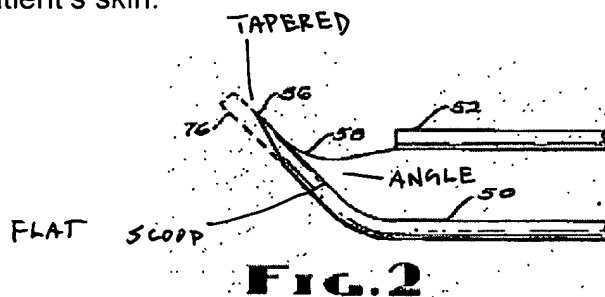


7. Babb teaches a method for removing a suture from the skin of a patient, comprising the steps of: apply heat to a loop of the suture so as to heat and cut the suture loop; removing the suture from the patients' skin; inserting a thin, resistive heating element under a loop of the suture, between the patient's skin and a knotted portion of the suture; activating the resistive heating element so as to heat and cut the suture loop; and removing the suture from the patient's skin (col. 5, lines 56-75).

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8. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Babb.

9. Babb teaches the suture removal instrument of claim, wherein the tapered tip comprises a flat scoop. In the alternative, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to make the tapered tip of Babb more flat/shovel like to avoid piercing of a patient's skin.



***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Babb.

12. Babb teaches the suture removal instrument of claim 1. It should be noted that Babb fails to teach a power cord adapted for connection to a wall outlet. However, it is well known in the art of hand-held device to include a power cord for connection to a wall outlet. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a power cord to the suture removal

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instrument as an alternative to a battery for a constant supply of power as opposed to a battery that can be exhausted.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

13. Claims 15-17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Conclusion***

14. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

**Contacts**


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael G. Mendoza whose telephone number is (571) 272-4698. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anh Tuan Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-44963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



MM

  
GLENN K. DAINOFF  
PRIMARY EXAMINER